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KERRY: ANOTHER CANDIDATE OF THE BIG BOSSES

U.S. workers have lost 2.7 million jobs since 2001. Presidential hopeful John Kerry blames "Benedict Arnold" corporate executives for moving the jobs overseas and proposes stiff tax penalties for "offshoring" corporations. But Kerry is a complete hypocrite. Like George Bush, Kerry both serves, and belongs to, the capitalist ruling class. Its interests are fundamentally opposed to those of the working class. Capitalists relentlessly seek maximum profit, whether it entails exploiting cheap labor in China and India or spilling workers' blood to secure Mideast oil. A Kerry administration would be just as deadly to workers as Bush's has been.

When Kerry and his AFL-CIO backers, in effect, demand "American jobs for American workers," they are blaming other workers (along with a few CEOs) for unemployment here. While doing nothing to fight U.S. joblessness, his "anti-corporate" baloney — supported by Sweeney & Co. — is designed to build nationalism to get workers to support war and fascism, to fight for "our" jobs, "our companies" and "our" country — meaning the bosses' class interests.

Even the capitalists steering Kerry's campaign fear that workers will see right through his blatantly phony anti-corporate stance. Says James Neal, an investment banker on Kerry's national finance committee: "It would behoove him to tone down the rhetoric on Benedict Arnold CEOs. … CEOs are doing what they're supposed to do: maximizing growth for their shareholders. To criticize them as being unpatriotic is not consistent with the values of a democratic [that is, capitalist — Ed.] society." (CBS news, 3/11) By "shareholders," Neal means the financial institutions (banks, mutual funds, etc.) that hold controlling interests in most major U.S. corporations.

The same finance capitalists who are directing firms to cut U.S. payrolls while squeezing super-profits out of workers here and overseas are bankrolling Kerry. "Executives at Citigroup, Morgan Stanley, and Goldman Sachs have contributed over $186,000 to Kerry's coffers. In his Senate career, Kerry can count Goldman, Citigroup, Time Warner and FleetBoston Financial Group among his top all-time donors." (CBS)

Don't expect Kerry to relieve unemployment if he wins. The economy looks pretty good to the rulers. "Corporate profits as a share of national income are at an all-time high...up $223 billion in the past year, according to the latest data from the Commerce Dept." (Business Week, 3/12) But workers face the uncertainty, dislocation, and poverty that go along with joblessness.

Racism compounds these problems for black and Latin workers — double the unemployment rates, a higher percentage suffering poverty, higher rates of disease along with less health insurance coverage and subject to fascist attacks by racist police. Kerry's pro-racist record includes approving Clinton's destruction of welfare and blaming the victims for their poverty: accusing them of "shift[ing] from self-reliance to indulgence and dependence…,from public accountability to…abdication and chaos."

The root of the problems is that the capitalist class, which puts profits above human life, rules society. Tinkering with economic policy or electing this or that candidate won't end the worldwide exploitation of workers. The only thing that can is the working class's seizure of state power through communist revolution.✪

For more about the 'jobless recovery' see page 2

Bush-Blair Buddy Kicked Out

200 MORE WORKERS' LIVES BLOWN AWAY IN SPAIN BY BOSSES' ENDLESS WARS

MADRID, SPAIN — Over 1,600 workers and youth were the latest victims of the "war on terror" — over 1,400 injured and 200 killed, including immigrant workers from South America, Northern Africa and Eastern Europe. This tragedy again proves that terrorism is a deadly enemy of the international working class. Whether it was ETA, the Basque separatist group, or an Al Qaeda-affiliated group(AQ), these terrorists kill innocent people, just like the big imperialist terrorists they claim to oppose.

Perhaps even politically deadlier than the carnage itself, about 11 million people marched nationwide against terrorism the following day, behind Spain's Prince of Asturias, Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi, the French foreign minister and other European rulers. The Socialist Party (PSOE), who won the March 14 elections, the opportunist left and the union leadership supported this all-class call for "national unity." They misled the angry masses to march behind these "good guys" whose attacks on workers far surpass the terrorists, including racist laws against immigrant workers in their own countries, pension cuts plus much more. Many immigrants killed in Madrid had no rights because of the racist "Ley de Extranjería" (anti-foreigner law). Pro-immigrant groups say many relatives of the immigrant victims fear claiming their remains because of the racist law, made even tougher in December.

But even at the "national unity" march, the mood of the masses began to change. When now-defeated Prime Minister Aznar appeared next to the Prince of Asturias, thousands booed them both. The next day, tens of thousands of angry workers and youth protested at Aznar's right-wing Popular Party (PP) headquarters, chanting, "We want the truth, down with the war, no blood for oil." There were confrontations with the police, who tried to disband some of the protesters, labeled "illegal" by the government. The masses chanted, "The PP government is illegal."

This anger turned into a rout of Aznar's PP, who just before 3-11 was a sure winner. Aznar's attempt to first blame ETA for the bombing to assure electoral victory backfired. All the evidence soon pointed to a Qaeda affiliate, and several suspects have been arrested, supporting this connection.

Zapatero, the PSOE candidate, seemed surprised at his Party's victory. But basically the masses, lacking any serious revolutionary communist leadership, voted for what they thought was the anti-war Party, the social-democrats. The PSOE — which represents pro-European anti-Bush/Blair capitalists in Spain — is saying if there's no UN resolution supporting the occupation of Iraq, it will pull out the troops. But the masses are in no mood to be fooled again, and the now "lesser-evil" PSOE might become the opposite. Again, the best victory workers and youth can have from this struggle is to build a revolutionary communist movement. Nothing short of that can end imperialist war.

Aznar deployed some 1,300 Spanish troops in Iraq which lead several hundred more troops from El Salvador, Honduras and Dominican Republic. Aznar sent the troops even though 90% of the population

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'Jobless Recovery' New Feature of Bosses' Boom- Bust System

EDITORIAL

The "jobless recovery" may reflect a new feature in capitalism's boom-bust cycle. A combination of greater productivity, shipping jobs overseas to low-wage areas and the increasing use of temporary workers could cut short the recently reported economic growth and send the "recovery" into a tailspin.

This has an especially racist character to it since black and Latin workers, suffer double the jobless rates of white workers. These groups, along with women workers, are more concentrated in temporary, part-time and low-wage jobs, and endure even longer periods of unemployment.

This has nothing to do with whether Bush or Kerry is in the White House. It has everything to do with a system based on each boss's need to make maximum profits or fall by the wayside to domestic or foreign competitors. The profit system cannot be reformed. It must drive down the cost of labor, causing permanent massive unemployment. Democrats and Republicans both defend the capitalists' class dictatorship, including imperialist war to dominate international rivals.

As long as there is no revolutionary communist movement to stop them, the bosses, with the help of their union leaders, can survive any crisis and continue to get away with murder. While the Soviet and Chinese revolutionaries had many weaknesses, they did throw out the capitalists and their liberal and nationalist defenders, and eliminate unemployment until their internal weaknesses caught up with them. The collapse of that international communist movement was a devastating defeat for the international working class which we are still paying for today.

'That's the way it is'

"Normally," as the economy grows, so does employment "At no other point since World War II has the economy grown for such a long period without adding jobs at a healthy pace…Never before has the American economy seen such a prolonged divergence between economic growth and job creation." In fact, in six of the last eight months, the labor force has contracted. "In most recoveries, exactly the opposite occurs." (N.Y. Times, 3/6 — all subsequent quotes from the March 6 Times unless otherwise indicated.)

Compared to "the early 1990s, at the same stage of the [business] cycle…non-farm payrolls had already SURPASSED their previous peak." Now, "total non-farm payrolls remain almost 2.5 million BELOW their pre-recession peak." (London Financial Times, 3/9) Employment industry executive John Challenger told MSNBC (3/4), "Real job creation at the scale [of] the 1990s is impossible…It doesn't matter what you do — that's the way it is."

'Squeezing Blood Out of the Existing Workforce'

One reason for the lack of jobs is the vast increase in workers' productivity — producing more with fewer workers. The vice-president of the American Management Association told the New York Times, "The goal of companies is not to hire." Says the Times, "Executives are focused…on fattening profits to push up stock prices…Since they cannot raise profits by raising prices [during]…low inflation, they are doing it by suppressing labor costs — getting more output from the existing workforce." The chief economist at a N.Y. economic research firm told the Times, "To the extent that companies can squeeze another drop of blood out of their existing workforce, they're doing it."

'Like a stomachache that won't go away'

Jobs are also being shipped overseas. In the past, companies "invested in new machinery, computers and other capital goods…The capital goods manufacturers…added workers, who then spent their salaries on goods and services, and employment rose in those sectors, too…But a growing portion of the spending is going abroad, creating jobs in other countries rather than the U.S." Dave Doolittle, who works at an Electrolux refrigerator plant in Michigan that's moving to Mexico, told the Times, "It's like a stomachache that will not go away."

Another factor is the widespread use of temporary and part-time workers. Temporaries do not get benefits like full-time workers, and "The most important benefit…is that they can easily be dismissed if business conditions turn sour." (Financial Times, 3/9) Of the 290,000 jobs added since April 2003, 215,000 are temporaries. Without the 32,000 temporary workers hired in February, private sector employment would have fallen. About 250 of the 800 workers at GM's

Locomotive plant in Chicago are temps, despite having worked there for six years!

Temps are the fastest-growing segment of the workforce, "who can be brought in and sent away as demand fluctuates…Companies…think of staff more like inventory, keeping things to a minimum." (FT)

The 4.3 million part-timers who want full-time jobs, but can't find them, have grown by one million since January 2000. Considering all these factors, no wonder there's a "lingering fear…that the weak labour market itself could start to undermine the economic recovery." (FT)

So what is to be done? Follow the AFL-CIO hacks whose only plan is to spend $44 million of workers' money to help dump Bush and elect Kerry, another millionaire warmaker? He won't change much for workers. But building a mass base for PLP among all workers, including the unemployed, can go a long way to rebuilding a new international communist movement. And organizing black, Latin, Asian and white workers, soldiers, citizens and immigrants, men and women, young and old, employed and unemployed, to march on May Day with the Communist PLP is a good start to end this new "dark age" of mass joblessness, endless wars and racist/fascist terror the profit system has heaped upon us.✪

Collapse of Old Communist Movement Gives New Life to Capitalism

The "jobless recovery," the ability of U.S. rulers to boost profits by firing millions of workers, is an economic phenomenon with political origins. Key to this success for the bosses is the collapse of the old communist movement into capitalism and the subsequent disintegration of the capitalist Soviet empire, which once presented a real threat to U.S. imperialism.

Tremendous gains in productivity, from high technology and the "offshoring" of jobs to low-wage locales like India and China, are fattening U.S. firms' bottom lines as never before. A weak, corrupt, pro-capitalist U.S. labor movement has immeasurably aided corporations in slashing millions of jobs and cutting wages. In the 1930s, when the Soviet Union served as a beacon, and U.S. unions had some red leadership, workers countered such attacks with violent strikes. Today's labor hacks barely peep. U.S. companies now exploit cheap labor in China and India. This would have been unthinkable before China embraced the profit system, or when India was a staunch ally of Soviet imperialism.

The same factors help Western European bosses. Volkswagen recently won a 5% pay cut from a formerly militant union in Spain by setting up plants in lower-wage Eastern Europe, now a part of the European Union. The Red Army once freed the workers of Eastern Europe from Nazism. Then, in one of history's greatest political setbacks, these lands became vassals of a capitalist Kremlin. Now they are again subject to Western European bosses. Recalling how he threatened a German metalworkers' union, Daimler Chrysler boss Jurgen Schrempp echoed Hitler, "We were very clear in the talks. We said, 'We have Poland. We have Hungary. We have the Czech Republic'" (Wall Street Journal, 3/11/04).

The dismal political situation worldwide does not make our party's task to preserve and build the communist movement, any easier. It does, however, make it all the more necessary.✪

Anti-War Feeling Dumps Aznar

continued from front page

opposed the war. On February 15, 2003, 10% of the population joined tens of millions worldwide in the biggest coordinated international protest ever, against the pending war.

The terror attack also exposed the Bush/Blair lie that the occupation of Iraq made the world safer from "terrorism." The fact is this is a war for markets and oil. The Bush-Blair-Aznar gang is trying to give Exxon, Halliburton, BP, Shell and Repsol a bigger piece of the oil pie in Iraq and the Persian Gulf. The AQ types represent Saudi and other Arab bosses who want the oil bonanza for themselves instead of sharing it with U.S. and British oil giants. Remember, these same forces, led by bin Laden himself, worked hand-in-hand with the U.S. and its CIA in Afghanistan fighting the Soviet occupation of that country.

Religion and "democracy" are just a cover for profits. Workers and youth must reject all these terrorists and fight for a communist world, without any bosses.✪

WHAT WE FIGHT FOR

✪PLP fights to smash capitalism—wage slavery. While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions all over the world. The Soviet Union and China returned to capitalism because socialism maintained too many aspects of the profit system, like wages and divisions of labor.

✪Capitalism inevitably leads to wars. PLP organizes workers, students and soldiers to turn these wars into a revolution for communism. This fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat requires a mass Red Army led by the communist PLP.

✪Communism means working collectively to build a society where sharing is based on need. We will abolish work for wages, money and profit. Everyone will share society's benefits and burdens.

✪Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of race.

✪Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women workers.

✪Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✪Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers.

JOIN US!

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Hit Racism of Warmaker, Strike-breaker U. of Chicago

CHICAGO, IL, March 5 — "Brick by Brick, Wall by Wall, Police Brutality's Got to Fall!" That's what 75 students and members of local churches and community groups, black, Latin, Asian and white, chanted outside the University of Chicago (UC) Police headquarters today. It was the third and last stop on their march protesting the beating of a black student by University cops.

UC, the "Harvard of the Midwest," is a major weapon in the arsenal of U.S. imperialism, fascist Homeland Security, and racist terror. It's a warmaker, strike-breaker and racist slumlord. Its murderous alumni include Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, one of the leading war criminals of the current Iraq War, and Attorney-General John Ashcroft, enforcer of the fascist Patriot Act. Their police force, with arrest powers, patrols the campus and surrounding neighborhoods, from 39th to 64th Sts., and from Stoney Island to Cottage Grove.

On January 24, student Clemmie Carthans was walking to meet a friend after a party when he was stopped by UC cop Jenkins. "What are you doing around here?" Where do you live? Why are you out so late?" Clemmie answered this racist interrogation and the cop moved on. When Clemmie met his friend, a white woman, they hugged and Jenkins ran up behind them yelling, "Ma'am, are you alright? Are you OK?" Even though they both said they knew each other, Jenkins called for back-up, and soon Clemmie was beaten, in handcuffs, and in the back of a squad car. After being subjected to almost an hour of racist abuse, the cops removed the handcuffs and said, "You're cool. Go home!" Clemmie replied, "I'm not cool. My hands are bleeding, my mouth is busted and you're going to hear from me again!"

The demonstration began at the Administration building, where a delegation presented petitions with over 800 signatures demanding University action against their cops. It marched to the site of the actual beating for another rally, and finally to police headquarters, where a preliminary police "investigation" found that nothing ever happened!

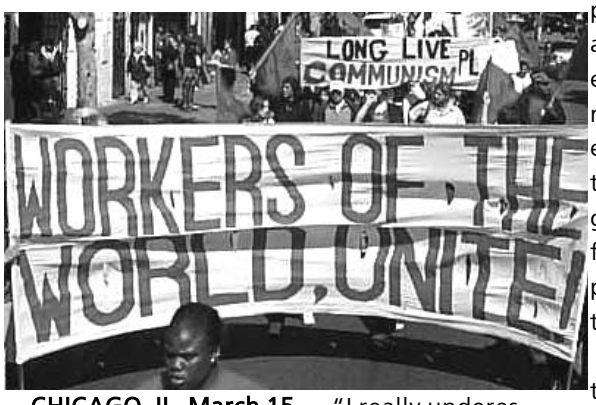
The racist assault on Clemmie is what neighborhood youth get as a steady diet. Recently about 200 mostly black and Latin workers were fired from UC Hospitals for parking in the wrong lot! Contract negotiations are underway for both the Hospitals and the University, covering thousands of workers. While University President Randall boasts about having raised half of a $2 billion fund drive, the bosses are shredding campus and hospital workers' health care and job security. Meanwhile, the bankers and billionaires who have been trained by, are tied to, and run the UC, are moving full speed ahead with imperialist war and fascism.

MARCH ON MAY DAY 2004!
Saturday May 1st
FIGHT AGAINST IMPERIALIST WAR FOR OIL
STOP FASCIST DEPORTATIONS
SMASH RACISM AND SEXISM
FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM!
WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNITE!
NEW YORK ✪ LOS ANGELES
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.PLP.ORG OR CALL 718 630 9440

PLP will use all of these struggles to rip the "liberal" mask off this "ivory tower." Communist revolution will destroy universities like this, and the murderous profit system they serve. A UC presence on May Day will be the next measure of our success.✪

Building PLP:

Anti-Racist Struggle Helps Workers Fight Bosses' Ideas



CHICAGO, IL, March 15 — "I really underestimated the hold that the bosses' ideas had on the union leadership." Those remarks by a Stroger Cook County Hospital worker reflect how the struggle to stop racist firings here is spreading the fight against racism, overcoming dangerous illusions and building a stronger PLP. The bosses are threatening to fire eight licensed, high-seniority black respiratory therapists on March 31 if they fail to pass a useless "certification" exam.

We're not only struggling to defeat the bosses' racist attacks against workers and patients but we're also fighting the bosses' ideas within our own ranks. A good sign is that at a PLP club meeting, 11 workers and professionals took more than 125 May Day tickets to begin organizing their friends, families and coworkers.

The inaction of the new "reform" leadership of SEIU Local 73-HC only whets the bosses' appetite. The misleaders refused to finance or even "loan" the workers money for a weekend review class. The "best" they could do was request an extension of the March 31 deadline, which the bosses quickly refused.

Meanwhile, PLP organized a forum of 50 students at nearby Malcolm X College to support the therapists. One teacher brought a class of respiratory therapy students. We're organizing professionals and students to tutor the therapists in their homes to help them pass the exam. Meanwhile, workers are collecting more signatures on a petition demanding an end to the racist firings, to be presented to the bosses in the near future. We're struggling with the workers to more boldly confront the bosses and union leaders, relying primarily on the regular readers and distributors of CHALLENGE.

This campaign is one of a thousand battles that can be waged here. The workers face endless attacks and patient care is a racist horror. This is the "shock and awe" that will set the stage for the coming contract fight in the fall.

Public health and all vital social services are being gutted to pay for the continued occupation of Iraqi oil fields and the fascist Homeland Security police state. Patients wait 48 hours in the Emergency Room for a bed, or over 24 hours in the Pharmacy for a prescription. This reflects how racism is the cutting edge of fascism and imperialist war.

The heat of class war and political struggle will help us deepen our ties to new and future members of the Party. From this fight we hope to bring a bloc of County workers to the PLP Dinner on April 3, celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the integration of Marquette Park. (See p. 5)

A few weeks later, Carol O'Neal, a dietician and chief steward who was fired last year for being "behind in her paperwork," will have her arbitration hearing. More than 100 workers rallied to her defense then, facing down Chicago and Hospital cops. We plan to give them more of the same, and build a bigger and bolder May Day. No matter what happens on March 31, PLP and the workers will be stronger than before.✪

Protest Racist Cop Murders in N.J.

JERSEY CITY, NJ, March 15 — Clearly understanding his role in the racist and anti-working-class judicial system serving and protecting the bosses' system, Weehawken cop Alejandro Jaramillo pled not guilty today to killing high school student José Luis Ives last July 16. That night the now-suspended cop Jaramillo brutally beat the youth unconscious. He died after being in a coma for eight days.

The hearing lasted 10 minutes while the parents of José Luis and 30 supporters were searched at the courthouse entrance, delayed long enough to prevent their presence in the courtroom. The angry parents said the judge should have waited until they were allowed inside. Outraged at this, they held a protest outside the courthouse. Judge Kevin Callahan set April 29 for another hearing to review the evidence.

Cop Jaramillo senses victory following the dropping of charges the week before against the four cops who caused the death of Santiago Villanueva. In 2002, when Villanueva suffered an epileptic attack at his factory job in Bloomfield, the cops said they "thought he was on drugs," so instead of helping him, they choked him to death. The cops got away with racist murder because the judge used a technicality, saying no one could identify by name or badge number the cop responsible for this murder. This means cops now have another license to kill with impunity — "group murder." A protest against this murder was held outside the Newark courthouse. More actions are planned.

(Next issue: How cops and their allies are using Community Policing to carry out their racist agenda, including the role of Rutgers' Professor Robert Kelling and his book "Broken Windows" in this campaign.)✪

Bosses' Health 'Reforms' Won't Solve Workers' Needs

CALIFORNIA — "People with employer-based health insurance feel that universal health insurance would give us a lower standard of care," the union rep told a chapter meeting. "But employer-based health care is on the way out. If SB2 [requiring employers to pay for insurance] is voted down in November, and if the grocery workers lose their fight to maintain company-paid insurance, it'll be gone. Conservatives are calling for a 'consumer-based' plan with individual health savings accounts and tax credits. [Democratic state senator] Sheila Kuehl's universal health insurance bill will be the only alternative."

"So we're between a rock and a hard place," a worker responded. "Privatization will mean more inequality and worse health care, but Kuehl's plan will lower the standard of care too. Labor shouldn't get suckered into supporting the Democrats' 'lesser evil' health plan. We need a better response." Heads were nodding, but nobody voiced what most needs to be said: This health care crisis is caused by capitalism, and the only solution is revolution.

"Whose problem is health care?" asked business writer Daniel Gross (New York Times, 1/8/04) Ours, obviously. Sixteen percent of U.S. workers and their families have no health insurance. That includes 20% of black families and 34% of Latino/as. For insured workers, rising costs and shrinking benefits are major contract issues.

It's also a problem for U.S. bosses. "American manufacturers' costs exceed those of [their] counterparts," Gross writes. "One of the main culprits is health care." U.S. corporations, especially large industrial firms, pay more for health costs compared to capitalist rivals. They "compensate for higher health care costs by holding down growth in wages" and cutting retirees' benefits, but that's not enough. "Health reform is a fiscal imperative," said a senior official of the National Economic Council in the mid-1990s. That means: make the workers pay, either individually or as taxpayers.

Bosses' Reforms Mean Rationing for Workers

International capitalist competition is a big reason why U.S. bosses can't reform their way to better health care for the working class. They must fight to maintain profits while pouring all the money they can find into the military.

U.S. bosses will focus health care expenditures on guaranteeing a workforce for war production and the military. The rest of us — including retired and disabled workers, the unemployed and those with jobs not directly related to imperialist war-making — will find health care strictly rationed according to the bosses' needs. That's the real meaning of "health care reform."

Big insurance companies, tightly linked to the giant financial institutions through which the rulers rule, will have a large say. (The Clintons' first choice for Attorney-General, while pushing health reform, was insurance-company lawyer Zoë Baird.) Some bosses, such as the very profitable drug companies, will be reined in for the "greater good" of the ruling class as a whole. But the working class — black and Latin workers especially — will be the big losers.

Liberal Politicians, Union Officials Mislead Workers

How can the racist rulers build national unity and get workers to sacrifice "blood and treasure" for continual war on behalf of a system that cannot even provide decent health care? That's the liberals' job, singling out particular companies or industries but never indicting the capitalist system as a whole. Politicians complain about drug companies or malpractice lawyers, while the AFL-CIO calls for "affordable health care.

Last year, California Democrats outvoted Republicans and passed Senate Bill 2 ("Pay or Play"), requiring companies to pay 80% of workers' health insurance premiums or else pay a tax to help care for the uninsured. When the California Chamber of Commerce challenged SB2, claiming it would be a hardship for small businesses, large corporations (more often unionized) responded: "We have to pay for benefits, why shouldn't they?"

Meanwhile, Kuehl is fine-tuning SB 921, which would set up a state-run single-payer health insurance program. A 1999 state-mandated study concluded that "under a single payer health insurance system, California could afford to cover all California residents at no new cost to the state" by incorporating existing programs like Medical, negotiating economies of scale, decreasing use of expensive emergency rooms for primary care, and getting physicians to ration care. Other cost controls include postponement of new benefits, cancellation for inappropriate provider utilization, co-pays and deductibles, and eligibility waiting periods. That's the real purpose of SB921, which states bluntly that, so far, "efforts to control health care costs and growth of health care spending have been unsuccessful."

Fight Racist Health Care 'Reform'

Health reform advocates say they want to help workers lacking any health care. In the short run, they might gain a little from SB921. But it really would reduce benefits for most workers while intensifying racist inequality and rationing. Black and Latin workers, forced into the hardest and most dangerous jobs, and pushed into the most crowded, polluted, and unhealthiest neighborhoods, have the greatest health care needs. Rationing would hit them the hardest.

The capitalists are jockeying over how to organize their profit-saving, racist health-care rationing system. Wherever the issue arises — in unions, schools, workplaces and professional associations — we must fight cuts in care while exposing capitalism's inability to provide decent health care for the working class. We must organize to destroy this racist system that is incapable of meeting the workers' most basic needs.✪

Phony 'Leftists' Help IBM Shift Low-Wage Hi-tech Jobs to India

India's government announced that IBM is planning to double its work-force in Calcutta to 4,000 by December, making it the second largest IBM workforce after Bangalore, India's Silicon Valley. This is part of IBM's globalization plan to better compete with other computer and software companies.

IBM wants to take advantage of the huge pool of engineers and other technical staff available in Calcutta, which, like those of Bangalore, work for a fraction of the wages received by similar workers in the U.S. and Western Europe.

Recently IBM announced it will export 4,700 jobs overseas. This is adding to the debate in the U.S. electoral campaign over outsourcing, even though it represents just a small number of the millions of job lost in the U.S. the last few years. It's the productivity drive that's causing job losses here, which increases the bosses' profits by using fewer workers to produce more. (See pages 1, 2.)

An important factor aiding IBM's move to Calcutta is its government (and that of the West Bengal state where the city is located), run by the so-called Communist Party of India — CPI(M)— ("Marxist"). These fake leftists are now guaranteeing a stable workforce: "Calcutta is an unusual choice.... Until recently, the city best known as the home to the late Mother Teresa wasn't a hot destination for software companies, while West Bengal was better known for its long-serving Communist government and labor strikes." (Wall Street Journal, 3/12/04)

But the WSJ added that this is now changing`; the CPI (M) government is "discouraging unions from striking."

These phony leftists are acting as agents of the bosses. Interesting enough, the CPI (M) and other such groups here used to portray themselves as "defenders of Indian capitalism" against imperialist competition. One reason IBM is increasing its Indian operation is to "match cost advantages enjoyed by their smaller Indian rivals." (WSJ).

For many years, CHALLENGE has criticized fake leftists like CPI (M) for being revisionists (acting for the bosses inside the working class). Day by day these traitors sink even lower. It's time for workers to join us in rebuilding a new revolutionary communist movement based on fighting all the bosses and building a society without capitalism, where production serves the needs of the working class.✪

Red Ideas Strengthen Garment Worker's Resolve to Fight Boss

"I want my pay now," I yelled at the factory owner while pounding my fist on the table. I had never done anything like this, and I was afraid. "I'm changing," I said to myself, but I felt good. I felt strong.

I'm a garment worker and a single mother. All my life I've been passive. I don't know why. I've always been afraid to confront the bosses or contradict others. Many times the owner has made me cry and feel alone. Before I thought this kind of "humility" was a virtue. But now I want to teach my children that they shouldn't be the way I was; they should fight back and not fear confronting anything.

Some years ago I met a co-worker, a communist friend, who always talked to me about workers' struggles, about organizations that fight for change, etc. Although we stopped working in the same factory, we continued being friends. She always told me, "We must fight back; we can't give in. We workers are strong." I believe her consistency helped me change.

The day of the confrontation, the owner had changed the pay day from once a week to once every 21 days. When I told her I had to pay my rent, she said, "That's not my problem." Like water that finally boils over, everything my friend had told me flooded my mind. I reacted with such strength and conviction that the boss got nervous and started to cry! Then she asked me to forgive her and started praying to a saint, saying she would no longer treat the workers badly. I don't believe her, but at least now I'm not the same. We're organizing in the factory and fighting together with the other workers, who were very happy to hear about my action.

I'm learning about communist ideas. For example, recently we went with some other workers to the city center. When we were returning on the bus, we started discussing a book about political economy, commodities, use value and exchange value. I don't understand a lot about these things, but what I'm learning seems good. Also, for the first time, I participated in a study group about dialectical materialism. Now I feel more secure and have more confidence in the Party and in communist ideas.

A garment worker who is changing

THE RAID ON NAZI CHICAGO HQ, APRIL 7, 1978:

THE BATTLE FOR MARQUETTE PARK

In Part I of this series, we described the long, racist history of Marquette Park. The segregated Southwest Side neighborhood was a bastion of racism, with a large population of resettled Nazis from Lithuania, the Ukraine, etc., plus cops and city workers.

Black workers had been segregated to the east, but a growing number of black auto and steel workers, teachers, city and county workers, were leading a migration west.

Early in 1977, the Nazis announced plans to march in Skokie, IL, a Jewish suburb with more than 7,000 Holocaust survivors. Virtually every a day newspaper or TV stories appeared about the Nazis and their leader, Frank Collin.

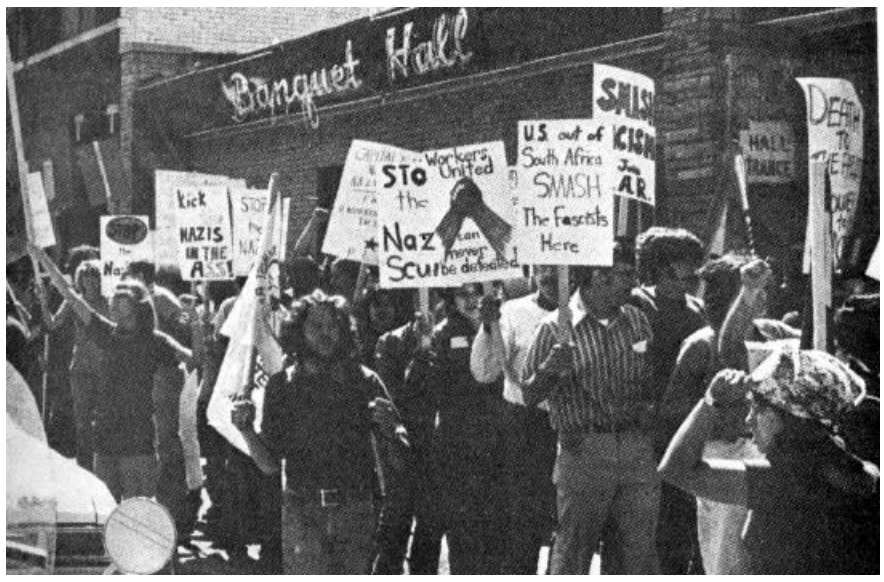
A movement quickly sprang up to "Keep the Nazis out of Skokie." The "liberal" ACLU intervened to defend the Nazis' "right to free speech," and took their case all the way to the Supreme Court, which ruled in their favor. The Nazis reaped millions of dollars in free publicity while racist attacks on black workers increased near the Marquette Park area. Between the media, the ACLU and unending racist attacks, the Nazis built up an aura of invincibility. It was then that PLP decided to smash them on their home turf, to stop them from spreading their racist filth and to end the violent attacks on black workers.

' . . . the Nazis built up an aura of invincibility. It was then that PLP decided to smash them on their home turf, to stop them from spreading their racist filth and to end the violent attacks on black workers.'

On July 2, 1977, PLP organized 150 black, Latin and white workers to demonstrate in front of Nazi headquarters during their "National Convention." Surprised by the PLP advance security team, the Nazis and police rushed out, to be quickly beaten down. A picture of a uniformed Nazi being beaten over the head by a multiracial group became very popular here.

But the media never tired of covering the Nazis. The fascists still talked of marching in Skokie, but PLP warned that their intention was to strengthen their hold on Marquette Park, where the city had banned all demonstrations.

In 1978, a plan was developed to attack the Nazis in their headquarters. The fascists had made an annual ritual of bombing and attacking Englewood's black workers on Hitler's birthday, so we decided to attack their weekly Friday night meeting on April 7.



Members and friends of PLP volunteered for the raid. Very serious thought was given to this dangerous action. While some disagreed and others were fearful, a committed group of 20 men and women was organized.

On that evening, this group gathered at a comrade's house and dedicated the action to: (1) The millions of Jews murdered by the Nazis, especially those of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising; (2) The black workers of Englewood, especially those who fought the Nazis' attempt to march there; and, (3) The Red Army soldiers who destroyed the Nazis at Stalingrad and saved the world from fascism.

PLP'ers arrived at the Nazi headquarters armed with bats, ax handles and pipes. We gained entry with a simple trick. Two white women knocked on the door, pretending to be students. They asked if they could come in and listen. When the door opened, the 20 attackers pushed their way in and immediately set upon the Nazis.

Many of the 30 Nazis and supporters fled out the back door. Many of those remaining were beaten down. One Nazi had his skull fractured; another had his arm broken. Bats and clubs were flying everywhere, as racists dropped like flies.

On a prearranged signal we left, leaving the Nazi office in a shambles, with "PLP" proudly painted on the front of the building. One Nazi started shooting down the block, grazing one comrade. Another comrade, Susana Findley, was injured and accidentally left behind in the commotion. She had bravely run to the back of the room, and unknown to the rest us, was injured and unable to retreat.

While in the hospital, she was charged with several felonies. A judge threw out the charges due to conflicting testimony from several Nazis, but the State's Attorney re-indicted her and tried her. PLP organized a nationwide campaign to support her, including demonstrations at every court appearance. Eventually she beat the charges.

The raid's effects were felt immediately. The next Friday night, Nazi headquarters looked more like Hitler's bunker. The fascists had barricaded themselves inside; only their members were allowed in. Supporters feared being seen near the office. It was the second nail in their coffin. May Day 1979 would finish them off.

(Part III — The May Day March in Marquette Park)

Rulers Now Sending Grandpas to Iraq

Staff Sergeant James Brown, a 53-year-old grandfather of seven, standing guard at Fort Irwin, Calif. Like many reservists and National Guard soldiers, he was activated to be deployed in Iraq, forced to leave his job at a seed company.

The bosses' endless wars impel them to call up even granddads, and there's no end in sight. CIA director George Tenet, testifying before the Senate Intelligence Committee, presented a "bleak vision of a war on terrorism without end, in which even the destruction of al-Qaeda would not make America safe." (The Telegraph, London, 2/25) — all this to protect the profits of Exxon, Halliburton, Chase Morgan & Co., from Baghdad to Kabul to Port-au-Prince. This is the future capitalism offers all workers. Let's organize to fight for a world without bosses and their wars. Join the communist PLP and march with us on May Day.✪

GI Says Army's 'Psychotic' Cases Are Really Anti-War Views

Nine soldiers in my National Guard unit are either en route to Iraq or are already there. Although they all volunteered, the imminent threat of everyone being activated has destroyed the already low morale of myself and many other troops. To prevent soldiers' personal objections to deployment from becoming politicized, a psychiatrist spoke to us about coping with combat-induced stress.

Her talk was disturbing because it implied that soldiers who freak out during combat situations are somehow personally weak and dysfunctional. I remarked that soldiers who become stressed out by the genocide against the Iraqis and the senseless murders of fellow soldiers are hardly being irrational. Many of the "psychotic" cases of stress in Iraq are actually intense — though unformulated — political objections to the invasion.

Though I received a warm reception from several soldiers, the psychiatrist quickly co-opted my statement by mentioning that she too, an Army officer, personally disagreed with the war. But to convince us that even cynical soldiers must carry out orders, she told us she would cope with her disagreements and carry out her duty, as should all soldiers.

I thought I had lost the debate, but some soldiers saw through this officer's pacification strategy. One approached me later and told me she liked what I said, and that the officer basically told us to shut up and follow orders. Another soldier turned around and said he agreed that the officer basically ignored the question of politically induced stress.

My unit failed to convince the soldiers to turn political objectives to the invasion into personal, "private problems" that the Army could solve. For many, the idea of "coping" was clearly another way of forcing us to fight and die for a war we're not won to fighting. The military will face increased resistance from soldiers like me who voluntarily or forcefully become activated.✪

Red GI

LETTERS

Learning by Doing At Pro-Aristide March

Recently some comrades, including two high school students, attended a pro-Aristide rally in Brooklyn. As we joined the rally, people grabbed our leaflets, translated into Creole, which attacked Aristide and capitalism for the poverty in Haiti. One woman shook our hand and thanked us for being there. Others read our signs — "Workers of the World, Unite," and "Workers Need to Dump Capitalism" — and nodded agreement.

We had distributed about 30 leaflets when one woman handed it back to us, screaming, "I don't want this." Another man followed her lead. Soon there was a small but angry group yelling at us to leave, calling us "C.I.A." for our politics opposing Aristide (who Clinton returned to power in 1994 with 20,000 U.S. troops) and the Tontons Macoute "rebels" (put in power by Bush's Marines). For a while we sold CHALLENGE across the street and then headed for a forum on Haiti we had organized. Unfortunately at this morning rally we were a small, mainly non-Creole-speaking group.

As our forum was starting, we heard the Haitian demonstration march by. We now had a larger group of about a dozen, some of whom spoke Creole. The youth at the meeting decided that since the forum was about Haiti we should join the march. We made signs in Creole which read "Capitalism is the Problem" and went out with our remaining 470 leaflets from the morning.

The demonstration had grown to several hundred. As we joined it, we received a much better response. We sold many CHALLENGES and distributed most of the leaflets. One young person said that another man even danced with him. Although there was still some disagreement with our ideas, many people agreed that the capitalist system and its cronies were responsible for Haiti's chaos and poverty.

Although ultimately three of the organizers asked us to leave — because we dared to criticize Aristide and the "rebels" as agents of capitalism and imperialism — we accomplished our goals. The youth, especially the two who had been with us in the morning, saw many workers responding positively to the party's critique of capitalism and to our solution, communism, even while we were being attacked. The youth also saw the importance of being part of the action and bringing our message to the working class as opposed to just talking amongst ourselves. We were all excited about our actions that day and about our coming May Day organizing efforts.

Brooklyn Comrade

Object AND Organize

Sgt. Camillo Mejía of North Miami, Fla. has caused quite an uproar. His National Guard unit declared him AWOL when he failed to report for duty. He had come home from Iraq in October, on leave after having served there for five months. He's refusing to return to Iraq, declaring himself a Conscientious Objector (CO). He is remorseful over a shooting in which several Iraqi civilians were killed. "This is a war over oil," he said, "and I don't think any soldier should enlist to fight for oil." He added that he was ready to go to jail for his beliefs.

Mejía first reported to a Massachusetts Air Force base where he declared himself a CO. They ordered him back to his unit, the 1st Battalion of the 124th Infantry Regiment in Florida. Upon his arrival at the Ft. Lauderdale airport, he declared himself a CO while being supported by his mother, an aunt, his lawyer and Oliver Perez, who served with him in Iraq. "I fought alongside him in many battles," said Perez. "He is not a coward. He is a brave leader and should not be jailed." (El Diario-La Prensa, NYC, 3/17)

Mejias, an immigrant from Nicaragua, spent three years in the Army and five in the National Guard. He was studying at the Univ. of Miami when he was activated for duty in Iraq. Like many other soldiers, he is part of the potential weak link in the U.S. bosses' war machine. Two more soldiers in a medical unit in Iraq have also declared themselves COs and want to be sent home. These soldiers increasingly are realizing that the rulers' endless wars only serve the interests of Exxon-Mobil, Halliburton, Texaco, Shell, etc.

Although their courage is to be admired, it would be more productive to stay in and fight to win other soldiers to organize against the profiteering bosses' wars.

A NYC Reader

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China & U.S.: Whose $ Are Helping Who?

Recently I attended a meeting where workers were analyzing the Party's work. It began with a report about inter-imperialist rivalry, a presentation about petro dollars and euros. The reporter said that, the U.S. has the world's most powerful military, it's also the number one debtor nation. Another participant said that China is now the world's number one exporter and is investing here, helping finance the U.S. deficit.

Then another worker, who's very active on his job, thanked the comrades for their reports. "This will really help me on my job," he said. "A lot of my friends think the U.S. is funding China. They think that's one of the reasons for the attacks on our benefits. But it's just the opposite. China's helping fund the U.S. debt."

This worker is fighting to bring an entire world view to his friends. The more he and they do that, the more the workers respond with more questions and discussion, and the more they read CHALLENGE.

A Comrade

'The Passion' and 'DaVinci Code' Book Mirror Church Split

Some time ago, CHALLENGE ran an article on the visible struggle within worldwide Catholicism over the growing child abuse scandal. It argued that this battle reflected underlying inter-imperialist tensions, especially the drive by U.S. bosses to undermine the allegiance of U.S. Catholics to the European-papacy-run Church. This is relative to all the hoopla about Mel Gibson's box office smash, "The Passion of the Christ," and the best-selling book, "The DaVinci Code" by Dan Brown.

Gibson's movie revives the medieval passion play that focused almost exclusively on the torture and brutalization of Jesus, the son of God according to the Christian theology/mythology. The passion plays were popular during Europe's Black Plague and the 100 Years War, an era of widespread misery among much of the population. Perhaps the graphic depictions of torture and execution somewhat mirrored real life and provided some solace to people living amidst massive exploitation, disease and death.

But some passion plays blamed Jews for Jesus' death. This spawned notorious anti-Semitic writings and ultimately racist attacks on Jews. Gibson's movie promotes this anti-Semitism.

It's hard to know where this stuff fits into the broader politics and ideology of Catholicism. The Catholic Church, under Pope Pius XII, made all kinds of deals with the Nazis before, during and after World War II. Church officials helped many Nazis escape to South America. Gibson's father, Hutton Gibson, is a long-standing Nazi-defending holocaust-"denier." Gibson belongs to a fundamentalist Catholic sect that's even to the right of the Vatican, and rejects Vatican II (when the Church adopted the position that Jews were not responsible for Jesus' death). So the Gibson movie reflects a particularly vicious, racist and fascist brand of Catholicism.

In "The DaVinci Code," the Church is the bad guy, especially the secretive, conservative Opus Dei group that figures heavily in the plot. The book shines a positive light on a pro-feminist tendency within Catholicism which says that Mary Magdalene was really the political companion and lover of Jesus and a leader in her own right of a movement that was far more egalitarian and pro-woman than the dominant, more conservative tendency. The conservative church attacked Mary Magdalene as a prostitute and forbade the ordination of women, excluding them from power. The Holy Grail was not a cup but actually the documentation of Mary Magdalene's true historical role.

There's lot's more to the story (it's not a bad read), but this book promotes the idea that the Catholic Church, governed by the Vatican, is a reactionary force that has long suppressed progressive forces and ideas. This fits right in with the anti-child abuse movement and further reinforces the split within worldwide Catholicism.

These cultural phenomena are very much on people's minds these days and can make for valuable political discussion among our friends and co-workers. Readers who know more about it, or have had some recent discussions, should write in.

Mid-Western Comrade

From Altar Boy to Communist

The article "Did Jesus Exist?" (CHALLENGE, 3/17) has caused some disagreements among friends. Even some religious skeptics believe there was a Jesus. I was raised as a Catholic, educated by nuns in early childhood and was an altar boy. I believed there was a Jesus who went through Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection. Hell, I even participated as a Roman soldier in a Holy Week procession marking the crucifixion. But after being involved in the anti-war, anti-racist struggles of the '60s and early '70s, and studying historical and dialectical materialism, I began to understand.

First of all, the whole idea of dying and returning from death during Harvest time began with the gods of Ancient Babylon (modern Iraq). Christianity copied this and many other ancient pagan rites from the Roman Empire (like Christmas).

The name Jesus (Joshua in Greek) was used by many rebel leaders in ancient Judea. The Talmud mentions one from about 100 B.C. But there was no Jesus as portrayed in the Bible and by Gibson. The REAL question is, are the New Testament Gospels basically historical? The Gospels are the New Testaments' sources for the life of Jesus. The writings of "St. Paul" — himself probably not a real person — do not discuss Jesus as though he was an historical person. No, the Gospels are theology. The book by Price, "The Incredible Shrinking Son of Man," debunks the idea that Jesus Christ existed.

Most people with religious beliefs want a better world, a society without war, oppression and racist terror. They are the victims of the collaboration of capitalism with the religious establishment, from Rome to Baghdad to New York City. They can and will be won to fight for a better world since their interests contradict those of their religious leaders. But we must wage ideological struggle with them about the anti-working-class ideas pushed by the rulers — racism, individualism, sexism, patriotism and religion. We must fight the idea that the more you suffer now the better you will be in the after life (like the Passion or the Islamic jihadists say).

A. Teo

Atheist Says Class Struggle Primary

In CHALLENGE's "Did Jesus Exist" article (3/17), the author makes good points

continued on next page

MORE LETTERS

about the Mel Gibson Christ film being used to promote anti-Semitism and U.S. imperialism against Islamic fundamentalists. But the title and article make the arrogant claim that a man who hundreds of millions of workers see as a symbol of their resistance to oppression and who died for his people — simply never existed!

According to the article, "There is historical evidence for…even James, 'the brother of the Lord,' called Jesus' brother in the Book of Acts, but NOT for Jesus." But that statement raises the question, if there is historical evidence for the existence of Jesus' brother, how could Jesus not have existed? Whether Jesus existed or not, a more important question is, does PLP win Catholics to the Party by opening up a debate on issues like this or by, for instance, showing how the Pope and his Church are aiding imperialists to oppress Catholics?

Billions of people are born into families and societies that accept religion's mythology but many were able to engage in revolutionary and workers' struggles. One relevant example is devout Irish Catholics who rejected religious non-violence and learned how to organize and fight against British imperialism. Then they came to the U.S. and used that experience to defeat cops and bosses' goons and organize the Transport Workers Union (TWU). Mike Quill, union president when it was a mostly Catholic union, said, "We never heard a peep out of the Bishops when we were slaving 12 hours a day and being abused by the bosses, but now that we have a strong union and a 48-hour workweek, the Bishops say we are all communists and going to hell."

I think unity will be earned and more will be learned through class struggle than from debates on mythology.

TWU Catholic turned red

CHALLENGE COMMENTS: Thank you for your letter. As the article says, there is historical evidence for a man named James but not for Jesus. The Book of Acts, which is not history but rather theology/mythology, says this man called James was the brother of Jesus. But again, the Book of Acts and the entire New Testament is not history. They were written one to two centuries after Jesus was supposedly crucified. To make the claim that Jesus didn't exist isn't "arrogant" but a matter of scientific and historical analysis. All serious historians know there was no historical Jesus.

But the letter's main point is that saying Jesus did not exist is not a good way to win people who believe in Christianity to our politics. This raises two questions:

Since 9/11 and the priests' child abuse scandal, the whole question of religion has become an even more prominent part of the ideological/cultural barrage pushed by the rulers and their media. "The Passion of the Christ" has been seen by tens of millions of people here in the US and worldwide. Religious fundamentalism has become a weapon of war, fascism and racism from the Middle East to Middle America. It would be very opportunist of us not to participate in the ideological debate on this question.

The second question involves organized religion. CHALLENGE has a long history of exposing the Pope, the Ayatollahs, the child-abusing priests, and both the Christian and Muslim Fundamentalists. PLP'ers are active in churches and church-based religious organizations where we debate all these issues with many people, always based on fighting war, racism, fascist terror, and so on. The world communist movement has always attacked religion in all its aspects (since Engels' "The Origins of Christianity" and many writings by Lenin and others). Historically, communists have attacked religion ideologically and the pro-capitalist church hierarchy while *never attacking people with religious beliefs.* On the contrary, when we expose organized religion and its concepts, we're better able to win people involved in class struggle to our politics.

Ford Profits Spill Workers' Blood

MEXICO CITY—Four months ago, Cándido Rivera was being treated in Ford's medical service department, sick with a chronic gastrointestinal illness. The company, claiming production was slow, let him go. They couldn't care less about this worker.

Without a job Cándido went to a public clinic and was immediately diagnosed with stomach cancer. They removed part of his intestines and stomach. Now, Cándido is close to death, with no health insurance. For 18 years, this worker gave his life to Ford. Now they reward him with unemployment and no health care.

The medical service at the Ford Plant in Cuautitlán, Mexico, is more than inefficient; it's criminal. Their main "diagnosis" is "don't send a sick worker home, give him an aspirin and order him back to the assembly line." The company keeps a medical record for each worker. When they detect one with a serious illness, they get rid of him.

Whether medical negligence or premeditated murder, Ford is responsible for the possible death of Cándido and of many other workers. The plant's deadly chemicals and fumes cause many workers' illnesses, and Ford's fascist medical policies worsen them.

Toyota had replaced Ford as the world's No. 2 auto producer. In capitalism's dog-eat-dog competition of capitalism, particularly in this era of endless wars and economic crises, Ford must intensify the exploitation of its workers to compete with its rivals. Murdering workers is just another by-product of making Ford more competitive. The criminal capitalist system must be crushed by workers, to build a society based on production for our needs, not for the bosses' profits. The communist PLP fights for that society.

Many workers have been visiting Cándido on his death bed. He's a kind man, loved by his fellow workers because he's been a fighter. He always showed his class hatred against capitalist exploitation. His fellow workers will never forget him. We will honor him by winning more autoworkers to fight for communism.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS

BELOW ARE EXCERPTS FROM MAINSTREAM NEWSPAPERS THAT CONTAIN IMPORTANT INFORMATION:Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly (UK)

Liberals are capitalists too

To the Editor:

Emblazoned across the cover of the Feb. 15 Book Review, as an introduction to your review of "The Working Poor," is the most consequential falsehood in American political culture. "Millions in America are employed but remain poor. Why? No one likes it this way; not liberals, not conservatives."

The sad fact is that they both like it this way. If they didn't, they would do something about it…rather than continue to reap the (illusory) benefits of cheap labor. (NYT, 3/7)

Iraq war is not vs. terror

The Bush administration…baffled the world when it used an attack by Islamic fundamentalists to justify the overthrow of a brutal but secular regime….

The truth is that Mr. Bush [was] eager to invoke 9/11 on behalf of an unrelated war…. By the summer of 2002, bin Laden's name had disappeared from Mr. Bush's speeches. It was all Saddam, all the time.

This wasn't just a rhetorical switch; crucial resources were pulled off the hunt for Al Qaeda, which had attacked America, to prepare for the overthrow of Saddam, who hadn't. (NYT, 3/16)

Greenspan overlooks poor

Mr. Greenspan's view is that household balance sheets are "in good shape," and perhaps stronger than ever, because the value of people's homes and stock portfolios have risen faster than their debts….

Other analysts have begun to dispute Mr. Greenspan's benign view of rising household debt….

THERE WERE NO WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION...
US
...NO LINKS TO 9/11, AND NO ALLIANCE WITH AL QAEDA...
SO WHY DID WE INVADE IRAQ?!
TO MAINTAIN OUR CREDIBILITY!
WASSERMAN ©2003 THE BOSTON GLOBE

Mortgage foreclosure rates, personal bankruptcies and credit card delinquencies have been rising steadily and at record levels. Most of that stress has taken place in lower-income families, which is why it has not made a big impact on aggregate data about national wealth. (NYT, 3/16)

Kerry won't calm Mid-east

Mr. Kerry…sought to assure the attendees that he was as strong a supporter of Israel as Mr. Bush….

Abraham H. Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League…. said that Mr. Kerry "came very close to where the president is" on several fundamental positions. "There was very little room between him and Bush," he said. (NYT, 3/1)

US has low-wage future

Bush's own labor department reports that of the 30 occupations that will account for the highest job growth between now and 2010, two-thirds require minimal skills….freight movers, home health aides, janitors, waitresses, security guards, office clerks, and cashiers. The number one job-creator for America's future? Restaurants, including fast food…. All of these jobs pay pitiful wages. (Jim Hightower)

US trained Haitian army to kill Haitians

The question of the Haitian Army also overshadows the country's future. Mr. Aristide dissolved it in 1995, the armed rebels have announced its resurrection. The army was created by the American military after it occupied the country and imposed martial law in 1915….

Mary A. Renda, author of "Taking Haiti," an award-winning history of the American occupation, said the Marines created "a military that was intended to be used against the Haitian people."

Many Aristide loyalists are still hiding from rebel death threats and many elites support…the reconstitution of the army, which has always served the elites at the expense of its poor. (NYT, 3/7)

Unions can't fix capitalism

Today, South Africa's underclass is bigger than ever. Counting those who have given up the search for work, unemployment has jumped to more than 40 percent….

"If things go on like this, we could experience a new struggle, a class struggle," said Sample Terreblanche, an economist….

At a new marine park in Durban last month…10,000 people showed up to apply for 300 openings….

In other developing countries, legions of unskilled workers have kept down labor costs. But South Africa's leaders, vowing not to let their nation become the West's sweatshop, heeded the demands of politically powerful labor unions for new protections and benefits. According to a study conducted in 2000 for the government's finance department, South Africa's wages are five times higher than Indonesia's, even though its workers are only twice as productive….

Investors….weigh…those factors…in deciding where to build plants. (NYT, 3/13)

The WW2 Communist-led Insurrection That Defeated the Nazis in Northern Italy — Part I

One of the least publicized events of the Second World War was the communist-led mass insurrection that threatened a working-class seizure of power in Northern Italy in the spring of 1945. From June 1943 to 1945, the Communist Party of Italy (CPI) grew from 5,000 members to 1.7 million. Its most important base was in the industrial north where it led the anti-fascist Resistance movement. By the end of 1943, the U.S. Office of Strategic Services (OSS-forerunner of the CIA) classified the Resistance as a primarily revolutionary political movement, not a military one.

Early in 1944, with the U.S. and British armies fighting in Italy's south, the CPI, the Socialist Party and the smaller leftist Action Party formed the Committee of National Liberation of Northern Italy (CLNAI). The communists were the largest and leading section. By March 1945, the OSS estimated the armed Partisans of the CLNAI at 182,000, with 500,000 potential recruits, overwhelmingly workers and peasants. They were tying down 14 German army divisions.

The communists led this movement partly because of "their outstanding record of resistance during the fascist era, but even more from being the Italian representative of Communist Russia. Russia's charisma in this period cannot be overstressed. Tens of thousands of Italian workers looked to Russia for their model and to the Red Army for the decisive contribution to the creation of Communism in their own country. Stalin was a working-class hero, Togliatti [CPI chairman] his trusted emissary in Italy." ("A History of Contemporary Italy," by Paul Ginsborg; Penguin Books, 1990; p. 54)

"In Arezzo, for example, the Psychological Warfare Branch reported:….The support of the majority of people who style themselves Communists seems to derive from the success of the Russians against the Germans. People say that Communism must have something in it if it can produce such results." (Report No. 29, Aug. 5, 1944, quoted in Ginsborg, pp. 466-67)

In the North, workers were starving between the cold and mass unemployment. In the late winter of 1944, the Resistance organized nearly a million workers in mass strikes, lasting eight days in the industrial city of Turin. All this, in the teeth of the Nazi army which had taken over military operations from the fading Mussolini fascists.

The Resistance was growing by the tens of thousands. In fact, "where the Partisans had gained complete control, they set up their own republics:…Carnia in the northeast with 150,000 inhabitants, Montefiorino in the central Apennines with 50,000…, Ossola in the extreme north with 70,000. " (Ginsborg, p. 55) In August, the Tuscan Partisans took control of Florence north of the Arno.

The Nazis struck back viciously, massacring whole villages, transferring entire workshops with their workers to Germany. They took 15 political prisoners into Milan's piazza, executed them and left their bodies for the entire day as a "lesson" to the population.

But on April 10, 1945 the Communists issued their famous Directive No. 16, ordering the Resistance to prepare for armed insurrection. Between April 24-26, Genoa, Turin and Milan rose against the Nazis.

In Genoa, the Partisans faced two full German army divisions. The Germans had mined all bridges and tunnels and the entire port area, and prepared the industries for demolition. The Partisans defied the threats and began the insurrection at 4 AM on the 23rd. By 10 AM they had seized city hall, the telephone exchange, police headquarters and the prison. Clandestine action squads mushroomed from 5,000 to 20,000 men and women, young and old, armed with weapons seized from Fascist forces. The Germans threatened to kill 20 women and children if not allowed to leave. The Partisans then said they'd execute 1,000 German prisoners in their hands and all those taken thereafter. Then the Germans heard a reserve division had been surrounded by Partisans in the mountain and had surrendered so they were forced to give up as well, It was the first time in Italian history that a fully-equipped army corps had laid down its arms to "civilians."

Mussolini, his girlfriend and fellow fascists hanging after they were executed

The Partisans occupied the auto factories in Turin and drove the Nazis from that city.

On April 24, the 3rd Garibaldi Brigade stormed the fascist barracks on the outskirts of Milan while fighting began in and around the factories. Both groups coordinated their actions, and Milan was seized in two days. Mussolini had been there, but fled towards Switzerland with his Nazi SS escort, disguised as a German soldier. On April 27, the 52nd Garibaldi Brigade blocked their path. Il Duce was recognized, taken prisoner and shot, defying Allied requests to the contrary. He was hung by his heels, along with his mistress and other fascist leaders, in the very piazza where the Nazis had executed the 15 political prisoners.

By May 1 the Resistance had freed all of northern Italy. They executed up to 15,000 fascists and Nazi collaborators. The CLNAI was in full control of the state apparatus. The U.S. and Britain now had a problem. "How to take physical possession of northern Italy, for revolution in the wake of fascism was for them merely the prospect of a Pyrrhic victory," [one that's too costly].

(*Next issue: why there was no communist-led revolution in Italy after the war*).

Memories of World War 2: Living Through the London Blitz

BRITISH COMMUNISTS FIGHT THE FASCISTS

The sidewalls at the end of the cellar gave way. Masonry collapsed, though the structure held. We could still hear reverberations of the bomb in our ears. The dank, evil-smelling drains suddenly opened, emitting an awful smell. Our eyes and ears were filled with what seemed to my young eyes as a million rats, running and shrieking without fear, from one broken wall to another. Masonry was still falling. My grandma, ever ready, lit another candle, replacing the one blown out by the blast. She began singing an old music hall song, "She's My Lassie from Lancashire." This was civilian life in Britain during World War II.

After a cold, miserable night huddled in the broken-down cellar, we returned upstairs — my mum, my brother, my grandma and me. The "all-clear" had sounded very late, but we waited, fearing what was destroyed above. The old Victorian house still stood on Calcott Road, but nearby houses had been destroyed. The air raid wardens, neighbors and police were looking for people under the rubble. They brought out Mrs. Greene, looking like a smashed, flattened doll. They took out others, all dead. Their house had taken a direct hit.

People soon went about their daily routine. Grandma made tea, and mum made powdered eggs with toasted, gray-looking bread and margarine. We ate and talked about the bombing the night before.

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Britain entered the war on September 3, 1939, when the Nazis invaded Poland. I was a young child. My mother, my brother and I, along with the majority of London's children, left the city for farms, small villages and seaside resorts throughout Britain. People in more rural areas "guest-housed" city families to save the children. We lived in Dorset. We all had our ration cards, our new identification cards and our newly-issued gas masks. Mine hung around my shoulder. After we hadn't been attacked in about six months, people began to drift back to their London homes. We did too. This was the "Phony War." Britain and France were waiting and hoping for Hitler to attack the Soviet Union.

In the latter part of 1940, the Blitz started. Daily air raids on the south of England involved hundreds of Nazi bombers. At first they attacked military installations, the docks and the hundreds of small factories producing airplane parts. But soon the terror bombing began, mostly at night, on the working-class homes in the surrounding areas. This frightening daily terror profoundly affected me. When air raid sirens wailed, people ran for the cellar, if they had one, or any shelters they could find. Air-raid shelters had been built on many streets. Many people took shelter in the subway system. The London Underground was built deep under the city's clay and bedrock. We could hear waves of bombers flying over every day, and dogfights between the Royal Air Force and the Nazi Luftwaffe. The ground would shake. We heard terrifying loud noises, fire engine bells and shouting in the streets. We sat terrified during each bombing wave, hoping the next bomb would miss us. Soon we got used to it.

Thinking of those years, all I can picture in my mind's eye is rubble everywhere, streets littered with bits of broken airplanes, downed trees, destroyed houses. Everyone had black window shades so the city's lights could not be seen from the air. I remember bright moonlight piercing through a little pinhole in my bedroom nightshade, as I wondered if Hitler could see my room through that little opening. The bombing continued off and on for a number of years.

After listening to the radio news, my family would always talk about the hoped-for death of Nazism. My father was attached to the Navy; my uncle Joe joined the Army. Right away he grew a mustache, in the style of Joseph Stalin. When we first saw him in his uniform, my grandmother exclaimed, "You look like Uncle Joe!" My uncle beamed. Joseph Stalin and the Red Army were well regarded in our household, and many working-class families. We would always ask, "Uncle Joe, are you going to kick Hitler?" and he would laugh. My uncle's experiences during the Second World War turned him into a communist, and he joined the Communist Party.

From Red Mate